Reviewer’s report

Title: Making trials matter: pragmatic and explanatory trials and the problem of applicability

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2009

Reviewer: Peter Rothwell

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I thought that this was a useful review of an important topic - it is rather discursive and concentrates mostly on semantics rather than on practicalities but is useful nevertheless.

My main comment is that it would be much more informative if it included some examples:

1. An example figure of the "precis" approach that is described in the text would be essential.

2. A description of some actual examples of research that has been done to show poor external validity in particular areas - these might include Richard Beasley's work on asthma and COPD or Peter Watson's work on trials in neuropathic pain, for example.